

Docket No. AT9-99-174

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method for identifying and storing changes to a data processing system within a distributed data processing system, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:
- initializing the data processing system for a capture of an initial state of the data processing system;
- modifying the data processing system;
- capturing the modified state of the data processing system; and
- 15 storing differences between the initial state and the modified state as a set of configuration parameters in a depository, wherein the set of configuration parameters may be used to manage configurability of a data processing system within the distributed data processing system.
- 20 2. The method of 1 wherein the distributed data processing system is a heterogeneous client-server system.
- 25 3. The method of 1 wherein the data processing system is a Windows-based system.
4. The method of 1 wherein a state of the data processing system is captured by performing a snapshot of data within the data processing system.
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5. The method of 4 wherein the snapshot may be configured to include or to exclude portions of data within the data processing system.

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6. The method of 1 wherein the differences between the initial state and the modified state comprise differences between user files, system files, user registries, and system registries.

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7. The method of 6 wherein the differences between user files and differences between user registries may be used to manage configurability of the application on a per-user basis.

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8. The method of 6 wherein the differences between system files and differences between system registries may be used to manage configurability of the application on a per-system basis.

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9. The method of 1 wherein the differences between the initial state and the modified state comprise differences between .INI files.

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10. The method of 9 wherein the differences between .INI files is captured line-by-line.

11. The method of 1 wherein the data processing system is modified by installing an application.

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12. The method of 1 wherein the data processing system

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is modified by changing a registry file.

13. The method of 1 wherein the data processing system is modified by changing a .INI file.

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14. An apparatus for identifying and storing changes to a data processing system within a distributed data processing system, the apparatus comprising:

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10 initializing means for initializing the data processing system for a capture of an initial state of the data processing system;

modifying means for modifying the data processing system;

15 capturing means for capturing the modified state of the data processing system; and

storing means for storing differences between the initial state and the modified state as a set of configuration parameters in a depository, wherein the set of configuration parameters may be used to manage configurability of a data processing system within the distributed data processing system.

25 15. The apparatus of 14 wherein the distributed data processing system is a heterogeneous client-server system.

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16. The apparatus of 14 wherein the data processing system is a Windows-based system.

30 17. The apparatus of 14 wherein a state of the data processing system is captured by performing a snapshot of

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data within the data processing system.

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18. The apparatus of 17 wherein the snapshot may be
configured to include or to exclude portions of data
5 within the data processing system.

19. The apparatus of 14 wherein the differences between
the initial state and the modified state comprise
differences between user files, system files, user
10 registries, and system registries.

20. The apparatus of 19 wherein the differences between
user files and differences between user registries may be
used to manage configurability of the application on a
15 per-user basis.

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21. The apparatus of 19 wherein the differences between
system files and differences between system registries
may be used to manage configurability of the application
20 on a per-system basis.

22. The apparatus of 14 wherein the differences between
the initial state and the modified state comprise
differences between .INI files.

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23. The apparatus of 22 wherein the differences between
.INI files is captured line-by-line.

24. The apparatus of 14 wherein the data processing
30 system is modified by installing an application.

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B1 25. The apparatus of 14 wherein the data processing system is modified by changing a registry file.

26. The apparatus of 14 wherein the data processing
5 system is modified by changing a .INI file.

27. A computer program product on a computer-readable medium for identifying and storing changes to a data processing system within a distributed data processing
10 system, the computer program product comprising:

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first instructions for initializing the data processing system for a capture of an initial state of the data processing system;

15 second instructions for modifying the data processing system;

third instructions for capturing the modified state of the data processing system; and

20 fourth instructions for storing differences between the initial state and the modified state as a set of configuration parameters in a depository, wherein the set of configuration parameters may be used to manage configurability of a data processing system within the distributed data processing system.

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